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Dean A. Klein

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EXAMINER

LEE, CHUN KUAN

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

2181

DATE MAILED: 10/12/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No. 10/724,534	Applicant(s) KLEIN, DEAN A.	
	Examiner Chun-Kuan (Mike) Lee	Art Unit 2181	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 09 August 2006.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-20,22,31,33,37-40 and 42-47 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-20,22,31,33,37-40 and 42-47 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

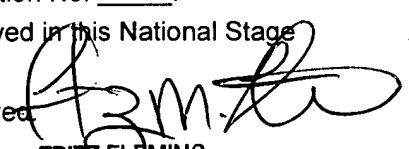
Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 26 November 2003 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.


FRITZ FLEMING
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 2100

10/6/2006

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 08/09/2006.

- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
- 6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Response to Arguments

1. Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 1-20, 22, 31, 33, 37-40 and 42-47 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection. Claim objection of claim 40 and claim rejection of claim 21 under 35 U.S.C. 112 second paragraph are withdrawn. Currently, claims 21, 32, 34-36, 41 and 49 are canceled and claims 1-20, 22, 31, 33, 37-40 and 42-47 are pending for examination.

~~mention~~

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

2. Claims 1-4, 8-9, 11-16, 18-20, 31, 33, 37, 39-40 and 43-46 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hsu et al. (US Patent 5,948,100) in view of Simcoe (US Patent 6,000,008).

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3. As per claims 1 and 12, Hsu teaches a method of performing a cache search operation within a digital processing system, searching a string of data for a match with a test data string, the method comprising:

receiving an instruction (interrupt comprising the STA (program start address) to perform a search operation, the instruction comprising a test data string and a starting address for the search operation (Fig. 8-9, 14; col. 22, l. 31 to col. 23, l. 48 and col. 25, l. 61 to col. 26, l. 8), wherein the received interrupt inherently incur the search utilizing the search address (SA) = STA, wherein SA comprises the TAG test data and the SET starting address (Fig. 9) and the search operation is performed by the branch target buffer (BTB 200 of Fig. 8 and col. 13, ll. 10-17);

routing the instruction (interrupt and STA) to a data string manipulation circuit (fetcher 400 of Fig. 8 and Fig. 14) capable of performing string manipulation instructions (col. 12, ll. 20-57), wherein the fetcher is able to manipulate by modifying (altering) the fetch address (FA) and the SA;

routing the starting address (SA comprising the SET starting address) for the search operation from the data string manipulation circuit to a cache memory array (BTB 200 of Fig. 9);

searching a cache line (cache block comprising 212, 214, 216, 218 of Fig. 9) in the cache memory for data that matches the test data string (TAG) by comparing (utilizing comparators 244-1 to 244-4 and 226-1 to 226-4 of Fig. 9) the test data string (TAG) with data stored in the cache memory array (Fig. 8-9, ref. 200), wherein said cache line comprises more bytes than the test data string (col.

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13, l. 41 to col. 14, l. 65), wherein the cache block (cache line) comprises four blocks of data and the comparators attempts to match one of the four blocks to the test data string; and

routing an address (predicted target address (TA) and predicted instruction address (PA)) of cached data matching the test data string (TAG) to the data string manipulation circuit (fetcher 400 of Fig. 8) (Fig. 8).

Hsu does not teach the method of performing the cache search operation within the digital processing system, searching the string of data for the match with the test data string, the method comprising:

comparing portions of the test data string with consecutive portions of data stored in the cache memory array;

generating a match signal for each portion of the data stored in the cache memory that matches a respective compared portion of the test data string; and

identify a plurality of match signals indicating sequential portions of the data stored in the cache memory that together match the test data string.

Simcoe teaches a system and a method comprising:

a plurality of comparators (Fig. 2, ref. 24.1, 24.2) comparing portions (e.g. portions such as "SI," "MP," "SO," and "N -" of Fig. 7) of a sequential test data (e.g. "SIMPSON") with consecutive portions of the data (e.g. data such as "SI," "MP," "SO," and "NX" of Fig. 7) stored in a cache memory array (Fig. 2, ref. 22.1, 22.2) (Abstract, col. 5, l. 57 to col. 6, l. 29 and col. 9, ll. 11-39);

generating a match signal for each corresponding matching portions by setting a match till now bit to "1" (Fig. 7); and

the combined matching signals indicate sequential portions of the data (e.g. "SI," "MP," "SO," and "NX" of Fig. 7) stored in the cache memory array combined matches the test data string (e.g. "SIMPSON") (Abstract, col. 5, l. 57 to col. 6, l. 29 and col. 9, ll. 11-39).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in this art, at the time of invention was made to include Simcoe's matching of the sequential test data with consecutive data stored in the cache memory array into Hsu's cache search operation. The resulting combination of the references further teaches the method of performing the cache search operation within the digital processing system, searching the string of data for the match with the test data string, the method comprising:

the plurality of comparators comparing to match portions of the sequential test data with the data stored in the cache memory array;

generating the match signal for each corresponding matching portions;
and

the combined matching signals are utilized to identify that the sequential portions of the data stored in the cache memory array match the sequential test data.

Therefore, it would have been obvious to combine Simcoe with Hsu for the benefit of searching for data with variable length in the cache memory (Simcoe, Abstract and col. 1, ll. 54-57).

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4. As per claim 2, Hsu and Simcoe teach all the limitations of claim 1 as discussed above, where Hsu further teaches the method additionally comprising routing the test data string (SA comprising TAG) from the data string manipulation circuit (Hsu, Fig. 8, ref. 400) to the cache memory array (Hsu, Fig. 8-9, ref 200).

5. As per claims 3 and 13, Hsu and Simcoe teach all the limitations of claims 2 and 12 as discussed above, where Hsu further teaches the method additionally comprising aligning the test data string with the data stored, by utilizing an offset (OFFSET) of the start address, in the cache memory array prior to said act of comparing (Hsu, Fig. 9 and col. 13, l. 42 to col. 14, l. 65), wherein the TAG is aligned utilizing OFFSET.

6. As per claims 4 and 16, Hsu and Simcoe teach all the limitations of claims 1 and 12 as discussed above, where both further teach the method comprising wherein said acts of identifying a plurality of matches signals (Simcoe, match till now logic 40 of Fig. 2) and routing an address of cached data is performed by a decoder (Hsu, priority decoders 232, 234 of Fig. 9) (Hsu, col. 14, l. 57 to col. 15, l. 57 and Simcoe, Abstract, col. 5, l. 57 to col. 6, l. 29 and col. 9, ll. 11-39).

7. As per claims 8 and 18, Hsu and Simcoe teach all the limitations of claims 1 and 12 as discussed above, where Hsu further teaches the method comprising

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wherein said act of comparing is performed by a plurality of comparators (Hsu, Fig. 9, ref. 244-1 to 244-4 and 226-1 to 226-4) (Hsu, col. 14, ll. 23-65).

8. As per claims 9, 19, 33 and 44, Hsu and Simcoe teach all the limitations of claims 1, 12, 31 and 40 as discussed above, where both further teach the method comprising wherein the number of plurality of comparators is equal to the number of bytes in a cache line of the cache memory array (Hsu, Fig. 9 and Simcoe Fig. 2, ref. 16.1, 16.2, 22.1, 22.2, 24.1, 24.2).

9. As per claims 11 and 20, Hsu and Simcoe teach all the limitations of claims 1 and 12 as discussed above, where Hsu further teaches the method comprising wherein said act of comparing is performed in one single clock cycle (Hsu, col. 2, ll. 1-21), as each stage of a pipeline requires one cycle to perform, such as fetching one instruction per cycle.

10. As per claim 14, Hsu and Simcoe teach all the limitations of claim 12 as discussed above, where Hsu further teaches the method comprising wherein the data string manipulation circuit comprises a bus interface unit (Hsu, control logic 435 of Fig. 14), wherein the control logic interfaces between the received interrupt comprising STA and what is actually sent to the BTB.

11. As per claim 15, Hsu and Simcoe teach all the limitations of claim 12 as discussed above, where Hsu further teaches the method comprising wherein the

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data string manipulation circuit comprises a memory controller (Hsu, control logic 435 of Fig. 14), wherein the control logic controls the MUX (Hsu, Fig. 14, ref. 425, 420), therefore controlling what is inputted and stored into the memory comprising the SA register (Hsu, Fig. 14, ref. 410) and the FA register (Hsu, Fig. 14, ref. 405).

12. As per claim 31, Hsu teaches a processor comprising:

a data memory (Fig. 9, ref. 210) comprising a plurality of cache lines (Fig. 9, ref. 212, 214, 216, 218, wherein the plurality of cache blocks (cache line) comprises of four blocks of data), each cache line comprising a plurality of bytes of data (col. 13, ll. 41-65); and

an instruction processing circuit (BTB 200 of Fig. 8-9) configured to receive a test data string (TAG) and an instruction to perform a search operation beginning at a starting address (SET) of the data memory, the instruction processing circuit further comprising a plurality of inputs coupled to the data memory such that each input is coupled to receive one of the plurality of bytes of data of the cache line (col. 13, ll. 41-65 and col. 16, ll. 55-61), wherein upon receiving the search address (SA) the BTB inherently perform the search operation searching the plurality of cache blocks for data matching to the test data string (col. 13, ll. 11-16 and col. 13, l. 42 to col. 14, l. 65).

Hsu does not teach the processor comprising:

each input is coupled to receive a different one of the plurality of data;

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a plurality of comparators, each comparator coupled to a respective one of the plurality of inputs and configured to compare the byte of data of the cache line respective by the respective input with a portion of the test data string, each comparator further configured to generate a match signal when the byte of data matches the compared portion of the test data string, the plurality of comparators further comprises a plurality of outputs; and

a decoder circuit coupled to the plurality of outputs to receive match signals from the plurality of comparators configured to identify sequential portions of the cache line having data that, when combined, matched the test data string.

Simcoe teaches a system and a method comprising:

a plurality of comparators (Fig. 2, ref. 24.1, 24.2) comparing a different one of the plurality of bytes of data (Fig. 2, ref. 16.1, 16.2, 22.1, 22.2), wherein the data are stored in the respective memories (Fig. 2, ref. 22.1, 22.2) (Fig. 7 and col. 5, ll. 57-64);

each comparator coupled to a respective one of the plurality of inputs and configured to compare the byte of data from the respective input with a portion of (e.g. portions such as "SI," "MP," "SO," and "N -" of Fig. 7) of a sequential test data (e.g. "SIMPSON"), each comparator further configured to generate a match signal when the byte of data matches the compared portion of the sequential test data, the plurality of comparators further comprises a plurality of outputs (Fig. 7; Abstract; col. 5, l. 57 to col. 6, l. 29 and col. 9, ll. 11-39); and

a match till now logic (Fig. 2, ref. 40) coupled to the plurality of outputs to receive match signals from the plurality of comparators configured to identify

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portion of the sequential test data that, when combined, matched the test data string (Fig. 7; Abstract; col. 5, l. 57 to col. 6, l. 29 and col. 9, ll. 11-39).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in this art, at the time of invention was made to include Simcoe's matching of the sequential test data with data stored in the memory and match till now logic into Hsu's processor.

Therefore, it would have been obvious to combine Simcoe with Hsu for reason stated above in claims 1 and 12.

13. As per claim 36, Hsu and Simcoe teach all the limitations of claim 31 as discussed above, where Hsu further teaches the processor comprising wherein the test data string comprises a plurality of bytes (Hsu, col. 13, ll. 41-65).

14. As per claim 37, Hsu and Simcoe teach all the limitations of claim 31 as discussed above, where Hsu further teaches the processor comprising wherein the entire cache line is compared to the test data string in one bus cycle (Hsu, Fig. 9 and col. 2, ll. 1-21), wherein the entire catch block (cache line) is compared in parallel and one instruction is fetched per cycle.

15. As per claim 39, Hsu and Simcoe teach all the limitations of claim 31 as discussed above, where Hsu further teaches the processor comprising wherein the instruction processing circuit (Hsu, Fig. 9, ref 200) further comprises a memory controller (Hsu, output selection circuit 270 of Fig. 9) (Hsu, col. 15, l. 59

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to col. 16, l. 10), wherein the output selection circuit controls what is outputted from the BEB data RAM.

16. As per claim 40, Hsu teaches a cache memory circuit comprising:

a data source (SA register 410 of Fig. 14) means for holding a data value (holding the search address (SA));

a cache data memory means for holding at least one cache line comprising a plurality of bytes of data (Fig. 9, ref. 210, 212, 214, 216, 218 and col. 13, ll. 42-65), wherein the cache block (cache line) comprises of four blocks of data; and

means for searching the at least one cache line, wherein said means for searching is coupled to said cache data memory means and said data source means, and wherein said means for searching receives a starting address (SET) for a search operating of the at least one cache line (cache block) and aligns the data value with an offset (OFFSET) of the starting address to search the at least one cache line in one clock cycle for data that matches the data value (Fig. 8-9; col. 2, ll. 1-21 and col. 13, l. 42 to col. 14, l. 65), wherein each stage of a pipeline performs in one cycle, such as fetching one instruction per cycle.

Hsu does not teach the cache memory circuit comprising:

searching multiple portions of the at least one cache line that matches compared portions of the data value; and

mean for detecting a string of matches between the multiple portions of the at least one cache line and the compared portions of the data value.

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Simcoe teaches a system and a method comprising:

a plurality of comparators (Fig. 2, ref. 24.1, 24.2) able to search multiple portions of a memory (e.g. portions such as "SI," "MP," "SO," and "NX" of Fig. 7) for matches with a compared portions (e.g. portions such as "SI," "MP," "SO," and "N -" of Fig. 7) of a sequential test data (e.g. "SIMPSON"), therefore implementing the detection of a string of matches between the multiple portions of the memory (Fig. 2, ref. 22.1, 22.2) and compared portion of the sequential test data (Fig. 7; Abstract; col. 5, l. 57 to col. 6, l. 29 and col. 9, ll. 11-39).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in this art, at the time of invention was made to include Simcoe's matching of the sequential test data with data stored in the memory into Hsu's cache memory circuit.

Therefore, it would have been obvious to combine Simcoe with Hsu for reason stated above in claims 1 and 12.

17. As per claim 43, Hsu and Simcoe teach all the limitations of claim 40 as discussed above, where Hsu further teaches the cache memory circuit comprising wherein the means for searching comprises a plurality of comparators (Hsu, Fig. 9, ref. 244-1 to 244-4 and 226-1 to 226-4).

18. As per claim 45, Hsu and Simcoe teach all the limitations of claim 40 as discussed above, where Hsu further teaches the cache memory circuit comprising wherein the data source means comprises an external string

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execution circuit (Hsu, fetcher 400 of Fig. 8), wherein the fetcher is external to the BTB.

19. As per claim 46, Hsu and Simcoe teach all the limitations of claim 45 as discussed above, where Hsu further teaches the cache memory circuit comprising wherein the external string execution circuit comprises a bus interface unit (Hsu, control logic 435 of Fig. 14).

20. Claims 5-7 and 22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hsu et al. (US Patent 5,948,100) and Simcoe (US Patent 6,000,008), and further in view of Sachs et al. (US Patent 4,860,192).

Hsu and Simcoe teach all the limitations of claims 1 and 12 as discussed above.

Hsu and Simcoe does not expressly teach the method comprising:

wherein the test data string comprises a word;

wherein the test data string comprises a doubleword; and

wherein the test data string comprises a quadword.

Sachs teaches a cache system and method

wherein the cache memory stores a singleword per addressable line of cache storage (column 7, lines 1-5);

wherein the cache memory stores a doubleword per addressable line of cache storage (column 7, lines 1-5); and

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wherein the cache memory stores a quadword per addressable line of cache storage (column 2, lines 26-34).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in this art, at the time of invention was made to include Sachs's singleword, doubleword and quadword into Hsu and Simcoe's test data string.

Therefore, it would have been obvious to combine Sachs with Hsu and Simcoe for the benefit of enabling searching of words of multiple length, as Hsu and Simcoe's cache block comprises the maximum length of 16 bytes, enabling the storing up to a quadword.

21. Claims 10, 17 and 42 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hsu et al. (US Patent 5,948,100) and Simcoe (US Patent 6,000,008), and further in view of Tran et al. (US Patent 5,764,946).

Hsu and Simcoe teach all the limitations of claims 1, 12 and 40 as discussed above.

Hsu and Simcoe does not teach the method wherein said act of comparing is performed with a plurality of subtractors.

Tran teaches a system and a method for predicting an instruction fetch within an Instruction cache comprising:

wherein said act of fetching address is performed with a plurality of subtractors (col. 37, ll. 7-20 and col. 38, ll. 24-33).

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It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in this art, at the time of invention was made to include Tran's subtractor into Hsu and Simcoe's act for comparing.

Therefore, it would have been obvious to combine Tran with Hsu and Simcoe for the benefit of proper calculation of the address (Tran, col. 38, ll. 24-33).

22. Claim 38 and 47 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hsu et al. (US Patent 5,948,100) and Simcoe (US Patent 6,000,008), and further in view of Hicks et al. (US Patent 6,085,291).

Hsu and Simcoe teach all the limitations of claims 31 and 45 as discussed above.

Hsu and Simcoe does not expressly teach the processor wherein the data memory comprises a Level 1 cache; and wherein the external string execution circuit is associated with an off-chip memory controller.

Hicks teaches a computer system comprising:

a processor (Fig. 1, ref. 106, 108, 110) comprising of an associated L1 cache (Fig. 1 ref. 112, 114, 116); and

a memory controller (Fig. 1, ref 104), wherein the memory controller is an off-chip memory controller, external to the processor.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in this art, at the time of invention was made to include Hicks's L1 cache and memory controller into Hsu and Simcoe's processor's cache block.

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Therefore, it would have been obvious to combine Hicks with Hsu and Simcoe because it is well known to one skilled in the art that cache memory of the processor comprises L1 cache, because the processing speed of the L1 cache is comparable to the speed of the processor, therefore enable for the processor to obtain data stored in the L1 cache much faster, in comparison to a cache memory located exterior to the processor; and further more, it is well known to one skilled in the art for the memory controller to be associated with the processor, wherein the memory controller is utilized to control the system memory of the computer system.

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Conclusion

Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.


Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Chun-Kuan (Mike) Lee whose telephone number is (571) 272-0671. The examiner can normally be reached on 8AM to 5PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Fritz M. Fleming can be reached on (571) 272-4145. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

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Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

C.K.L.
10/02/2006


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